

# AAE/ASAALT and PEO Aviation Discuss the Army Aviation Modernization Plan at AUSA ILW Symposium

Robert E. Coultas

**M**ore than 300 attendees converged in Arlington, VA, to get an update on Army aviation at the 2007 Association of the United States Army (AUSA) Institute of Land Warfare (ILW) Aviation Symposium and Exhibition, Jan. 17-19, 2007. Co-sponsored by the Army Aviation Association of America, the theme for this professional development forum was "Sustaining Army Aviation and Transforming for the Future." Speakers included Army Acquisition Executive (AAE)/Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics and Technology (ASAALT) Claude M. Bolton Jr.; Program Executive Officer (PEO) Aviation Paul Bogosian; PEO product managers; Army commanders; current and former aviators; and aviation professionals from private industry.

The Chinook helicopter has been a mainstay in the Army's arsenal since the Vietnam era, and new variations will keep it in service for at least another 20 years. Here, paratroopers from the 3rd Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division, and Iraqi troops from the 4th Iraqi Division, board a CH-47 helicopter after participating in *Operation Vegas* in the Samarra, Iraq, area last year. (U.S. Army photo by Jeremy L. Wood.)

During the opening remarks, Bolton described the Army Aviation Modernization Plan's (AAMP's) status. "Things are going relatively well and consistently in what we said we were going to do. We have the same story year after year, meaning we are on track with what we are supposed to be doing," he reported. "After the Comanche program's termination, we made promises to ourselves, industry, the SECDEF [Secretary of Defense], the President of the United States and to Congress, most importantly, that if we were allowed to take the money that we were going to spend on the Comanche program, we would modernize Army aviation; and that's what we've been doing." Bolton said he learned a valuable lesson during the Light Utility Cargo Program testing about commercial-off-the-shelf (COTS) purchases. "We discovered that in DOD, let alone the Army, we have no policy for buying COTS for our testing, resource or requirements communities.

So, MG [James] Myles, [Commander, U.S. Army Test and Evaluation Command], myself and others are going to take this opportunity to spend a little bit of money and figure out what we really must do to buy COTS products, and then put policies in place so that the next time we purchase a COTS, the process is a bit easier. We are also going to offer those policies to our overseas colleagues and perhaps they will use them as well. We are not delaying the program; we are on schedule to deliver that capability to Soldiers."

Bolton added that although the AAMP has been a challenge, it is going relatively well. "It's not easy. A lot of hard work has gone into this across the entire community —

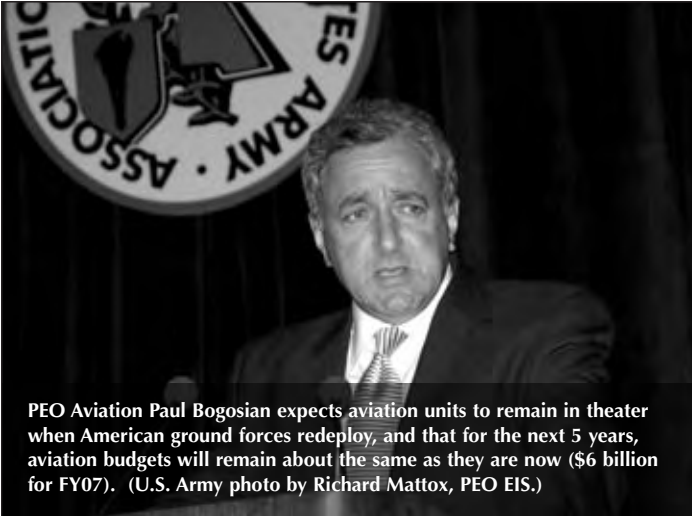
government, contractors and Congress have to keep this on track because we have the responsibility to get the capability to our warfighters as quickly as possible."

### New Challenges

Bolton used a football analogy to describe future challenges. "For the past 50 years, we've won our conference and the National Title every year. That's not bad — it's a great track



During his opening remarks, AAE/ASAALT Claude M. Bolton Jr. gave his assessment of the AAMP and challenges that lay ahead for Army aviation. (U.S. Army photo by Richard Mattox, PEO Enterprise Information Systems (EIS).)



PEO Aviation Paul Bogosian expects aviation units to remain in theater when American ground forces redeploy, and that for the next 5 years, aviation budgets will remain about the same as they are now (\$6 billion for FY07). (U.S. Army photo by Richard Mattox, PEO EIS.)

record. But, now we are moving into a different conference with team names like interoperable, system-of-systems, lean and coalition. If we engage the new competition with the old strategy we have been using to train our people, 'only quarterbacks need to show up for practice this year,' how many games do you think we will win? In other programs, I've had to terminate contracts or delay things, and when I 'peel back the onion' to take a look at these things, I find it's not because of bad people or malice, but that we have not trained or educated those folks. Congress has realized that and has already passed a law this year that we [the Army] are going to do something in the requirements area, so I believe they will have other things for us. But the Army is not waiting. We are working on how we can provide training and education for this group so that they can meet future challenges," Bolton explained.

### Who Makes it Happen?

Bolton explained that people are the Army's most precious asset and are responsible for the current state of the AAMP. "Without your brain power, ingenuity, insights and energy, none of the charts I put up today would be a reality. Taking \$15 billion and spreading it across a group of programs is one thing — it's another thing to

bring it home in terms of reality. The bottom line is that we are trying to provide a capability in real time to our warriors, because they are at war and they need it. What I need from each of you is your continued support, energy and effort to make all of this possible.

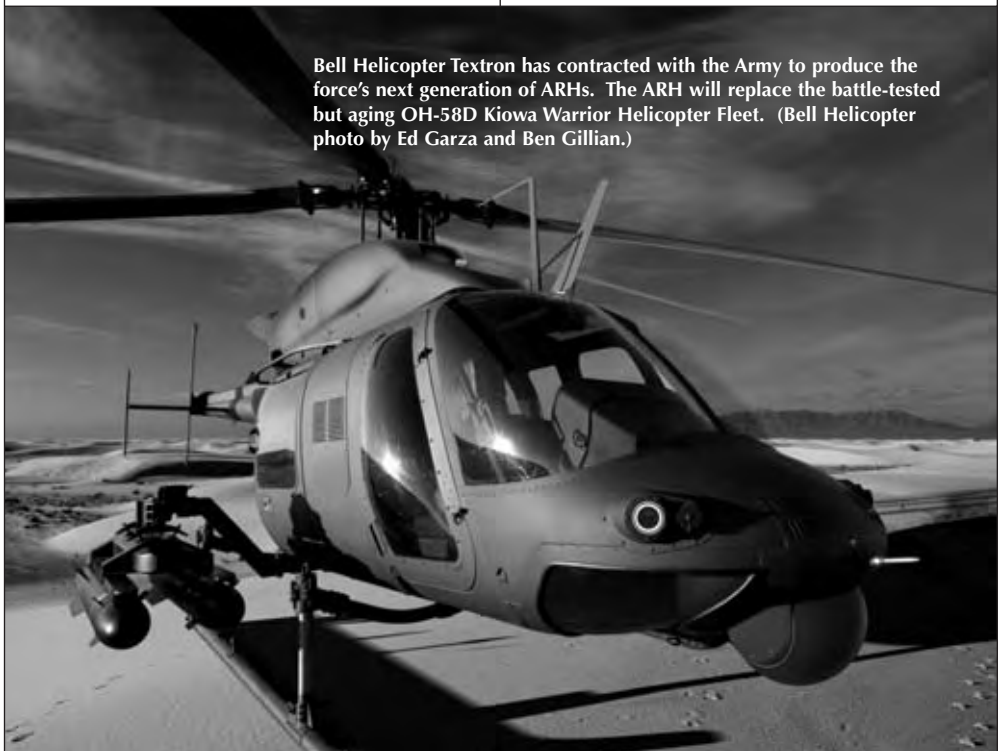
We have the world's best Army and the world's best aviation, which is a tribute to the people. People are central to everything we do in the Army. Institutions do not transform and make all this happen. Platforms and organizations do not defend a nation the last time I checked — people do that and will continue to do that," Bolton predicted.

### PEO Aviation Update

During his presentation, Bogosian indicated that he expects aviation units to remain in theater when American ground forces redeploy, and that for

the next 5 years, aviation budgets will remain approximately what they are now (\$6 billion for FY07). "We are bringing effect to the fight. We're getting products to warfighters and fulfilling our requirements as material developers to field and develop capability. It's a very robust budget and, as a community, we should be very pleased with it. It's a direct effort of the [aviation] community at large ensuring that we put programs that have substance into effect. We executed those programs and convinced the leadership that we are able and will be able to get warfighting capability to the aviation warriors as quickly as possible."

Bogosian said that one of the unforeseen consequences of the Comanche Armed Reconnaissance Helicopter (ARH) Program's termination was the scaling back of the service's investment, with only \$99 million of the Army's \$6 billion aviation FY07 budget set aside for science and technology (S&T). "One of the glaring omissions that came from the Comanche termination was the fact that we did not drive any portion of that



Bell Helicopter Textron has contracted with the Army to produce the force's next generation of ARHs. The ARH will replace the battle-tested but aging OH-58D Kiowa Warrior Helicopter Fleet. (Bell Helicopter photo by Ed Garza and Ben Gillian.)

"Army aviation is demonstrating its power, versatility and adaptability in very important confrontations in Afghanistan and Iraq," remarked former Army Chief of Staff and AUSA President GEN Gordon R. Sullivan (U.S. Army, Ret.). "Without Army aviation, the Army would not be as strong and adaptable as it is today." Here, pilots from 1st Battalion, 101st Aviation Brigade, 101st Airborne Division, provide air support over Tal Afar, Iraq, from their AH-64D Longbow Apache helicopter. (U.S. Air Force photo by SSGT Jacob N. Bailey, 1st Combat Camera Squadron.)



investment into aviation S&T. When you consider the oddity of that, in the sense that the Comanche was the great technology driver for Army aviation, when we terminated it and directed the dollars into near-term capability, we abandoned a substantial portion of how we were going to lay out S&T for the future. I have taken this on personally and will continue to do so to ensure that we pay the appropriate attention to reviving our S&T accounts. It's not so much the degree of investment that's a concern — it's how we are driving that investment and how we are focusing it. In 2026, are we going to be facing major upgrades on our platforms? Are we going to bring

these platforms in for upgrades to insert new technology? Probably not," Bogosian remarked. He also mentioned that he and others in the aviation community are working on the "the vertical lift requirement" that the Army needs.

Bogosian also discussed Lean Six Sigma (LSS) initiatives and said they "seem to have staying power," but he wants aviation to "have the flexibility to take on new missions" and not become locked into process over product. "LSS evaluations are essential responsibilities. We must ensure that we ask ourselves the right questions — how do we maintain effective opera-

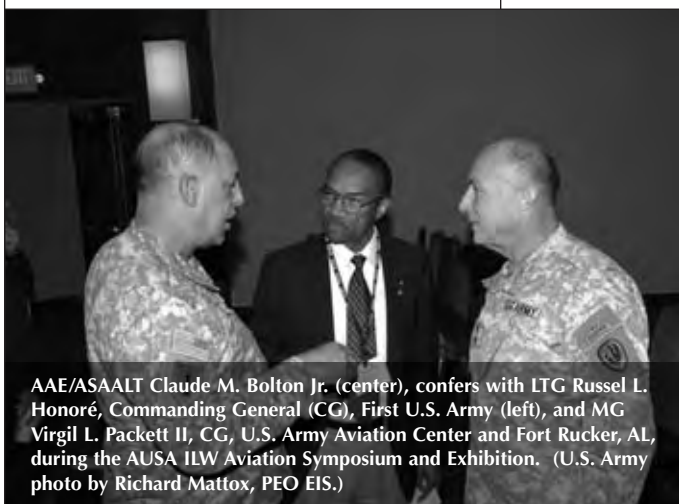
tions, and how do we ensure that in the end it's not the process we're managing, but the product that we're managing? That will be the focus that we will continue to have in PEOs."

Bogosian predicted that condition-based maintenance will be

expanded throughout Army aviation. "We have to put sensors on those aircraft and take advantage of the insights those sensors are providing for maintainers. It means managing the data is the smart thing for the maintainer in evaluating the results." Bogosian indicated that integration will remain a challenge and that it will be time-consuming and costly to insert technologies into the common operating environment and battle command. "It is going to take a long time to field a Future Combat Systems Army and also support the modular brigades of today," he said, adding that airspace management will remain an issue in the future as more manned and unmanned aerial systems come into play.

Recalling what Army aviation did 10 to 15 years ago, Bogosian remarked, "It must have been right. When you look at how these aircraft are performing in combat, and then when you look at the things we are bringing forward, specifically unmanned systems, you see how quickly we can respond and how adaptive a community we are. Let's continue to pursue our virtues. Let's sustain this partnership. Let's reinforce the fact that when the Army gives us a mission, we can execute it and get the best return for our investment and continue to see to the future. Army aviation will be around a long time and the Army and the Nation will be better for it," he concluded.

**ROBERT E. COULTAS** is the *Army AL&T* Magazine Departments Editor. He is a retired Army broadcaster with more than 30 years of combined experience in public affairs, journalism, broadcasting and advertising. Coultas has won numerous Army Keith L. Ware Public Affairs Awards and is a DOD Thomas Jefferson Award recipient.



AAE/ASAALT Claude M. Bolton Jr. (center), confers with LTG Russel L. Honoré, Commanding General (CG), First U.S. Army (left), and MG Virgil L. Packett II, CG, U.S. Army Aviation Center and Fort Rucker, AL, during the AUSA ILW Aviation Symposium and Exhibition. (U.S. Army photo by Richard Mattox, PEO EIS.)